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The Walkan mountains are crossed by only two lines, Sofia - Hezdra and Gorna Orehovitza - Dubovo, and circumvented by one line, Shumen - Karnobat, as a result these lines are greatly overworked and even in time of need could not take more than a slightly increased traffic. This dangerous bettle-neck is well known, and the old German plan for a trans-Ralkan line from Lovech to Karlovo is being included in the new Five Year Plan. The first section, Lovech to Troyan, has already been built by Youth Brigados, but no doubt will need a lot of improving before it is able to carry normal traffic.

section, and an important one strategically, is that of the Struma Valley,

As the lines are single track throughout most of the country and as passing points are manually operated, this heavy traffic puts the system under a great strain. Maintenance is not carried out soon enough for fear of causing too much dislocation to the system, so that when it is finally decided to do any maintenance, it takes far longer than necessary. As an example of this tendency is the disaster at Gara Lakatnik on the Cofie - Mexica line in June 1948, when the whole track collapsed with heavy less of life. The demage is not yet fully repaired.

- 10. The Sofia Ikhtiman Ploydiv section is also overworked, particularly between Sofia and Gara Belovo owing to the need for double heading.
- 11. When the new Sofia Volymar Pernik line is in running order it will help to take the load off the Sofia Vladaya Pernik line which at present handles nearly all the coal traffic (the remainder goes by road) from the mines at Pernik to the capital, and the Kurilo thermic power station.
 - 12. All lines from Sofia require, except for the lightest of trains, double heading, and heavy-freight trains on the Sofia Ploydiv or Pernik Sofia lines often have a third engine pushing at the tail of the train. Double heading is also needed on the trans-Balkan lines.

orkshops.

- M13. There are no locomotive factories in Bulgaria, although the Sofia locomotive repair shops, now known as the Georgi Dimitrov Locomotive Morks, have just assembled their first locomotive, a 2-8-0 tanker, from imported parts to a Hanomag design.
- The main locomotive shops are at Sofia, Pernik, Chervenbreg, Gorna Orehovitza, Ruse and Plovdiv.
- Rolling stock is built (although in the past the majority was imported)
 and repaired in the same shops as the locomotives and also in special
 shops at Drenovo, Stara Zagora, Karlovo and Rakovski.
 - 16. Only two breakdown oranes are known to exist. One of 15 tons is kept at Cara Pedusna, Sofia, and the other, of 25 tons, at Gorna Orehovitza. Jacks and rollers appear to be normally used for re-railing. Great ingenuity was used to re-rail an engine which crashed into the Isker River on the Sofia Mezdra line recently. A siding was laid from the main line down the hank into the river and under the water to the side of the engine, which was then lifted with jacks onto the track and towed back by two engines on to the main line.

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